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ABSTRACT

This monograph describes techniques and methods which may be used by parents, teachers, and other educators who are working to make schools more responsive to students from different language and cultural backgrounds. Emphasis is placed on the techniques and methods used by anthropological fieldworkers to study culture and their usefulness in solving culturally based educational problems. A review of the basic techniques includes a discussion of: (1) their purposes and strengths; (2) the steps involved in using them; (3) the limitations of various techniques and some cautions about their use; and (4) suggested learning projects which can be used by educators to practice the techniques. The basic techniques covered include participation, observation, recording, interviewing, event analysis, life history, and written essays. Major phases in a research project and ethical issues which should be considered in such a project are also discussed. (EB)

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DEMYSTIFYING THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE: METHODOLOGICAL TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES MONOGRAPH II

by

Margaret A. Gibson & Steven F. Arvizu

November 1978

(2nd Edition)

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CCRC TRAINING SERIES ON CULTURE

This monograph is a resource item for a training sequence on cross cultural education sponsored by the Cross Cultural Resource Center (CCRC). The training sequence "Demystifying the Concept of Culture" is composed of two monographs and forms the foundation for future training sequences. Monograph I, "Theoretical and Conceptual Tools", deals with the anthropological approach to the concept of culture and presents a series of conceptual tools which are useful for understanding the concept of culture. Monograph II, "Methodological Tools and Techniques", deals with methodology, introducing techniques and tools for studying the many aspects of culture.

The sequence, "Demystifying the Concept of Culture", is aimed toward developing a critical perspective on cultural problems. This series should be useful for many practitioners in multicultural situations who are interested in using new approaches to analyzing and changing conditions in their own communities.

The materials presented in the sequence serve as a take-off point for other topical and substantive concerns of the CCRC. These include monographs on specific cultural groups, the first of which will be on Chicano culture, parent-community participation in education, the cross cultural study of games and play, and educational innovation.

Note to the Reader

Applying anthropology to education will be new for many readers. As with anything new and unfamiliar, there is a tendency to disregard material which does not appear to address immediate needs. Although a serious attempt has been made to link and apply abstract ideas and terms to educational practice, the reader is encouraged to discover added utility through personal application. The level of language used in the monographs will seem too academic to some, too simplistic to others. This is inevitable given our multiple target audiences and we therefore offer a plea for tolerance among our readers. For those who find the jargon of anthropology difficult, we urge concentration, critical reflection, and application of the substance presented.

Steven F. Arvizu
Margaret A. Gibson
November 1978

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Ignorance about others
perpetuates ignorance about one's self
because it is only by comparisons that one can
discover personal differences and similarities.

The "glass" through which
other cultures are viewed serves not only
as a window; it serves also as a mirror in which
each can see a reflection of his own way of life.

Seymour Fersh

INTRODUCTION

Monograph II is written for parents, teachers, and other educators who are striving to make schools more responsive to students from many different language and cultural backgrounds. Bilingual/cross cultural education projects, among other innovative efforts, have been implemented throughout the United States to help meet the needs of diverse student populations. The successes and failures of such efforts, however, are frequently caused by conditions external to the projects, as much or more than by those directly responsible for the projects' operation and outcomes. This is true because schools and school programs do not exist in isolation; rather, they are closely interrelated to the community and the society in which they exist.

To bring about educational change, it is necessary to have some knowledge of the total context of schooling. Social, political, economic, and cultural forces all influence what takes place in schools. Educational innovation, including bilingual education, cannot be approached in a piecemeal fashion if it is to succeed. Approaches to instruction, curriculum, evaluation, or any other aspects of the educational process which do not take into consideration the surrounding

context, are at a disadvantage in achieving success.

Efforts designed to alter the status quo will, at times, seem threatening to the people whose lives or livelihoods are affected. Where change and innovation bring about shifts in people's roles and relationships, tension and conflict are likely to result. For example, if curricular changes are brought about by the teaching staff of a school, teachers' traditional roles and statuses are not affected and, therefore, the likelihood of feeling threatened is minimized.

On the other hand, where responsibility for and control over curriculum decisions is shared with parents and students, some teachers will feel uncomfortable and even threatened. Their normal roles and duties will have changed. Further, such changes will bring about a shift in power relationships, with parents and students gaining a voice in areas where they had previously had little influence. Some teachers and other school personnel may even try to prevent the changes or allow them to fail. To maximize the possibility for success in any innovative effort, those involved must have a thorough understanding of the setting and circumstances. Without this, a lot of hard work and good ideas may come to naught.

The fear of the unknown has historically been a strong deterrent to educational innovations. In the case of bilingual education, many people do not understand bilingual education as a pedagogical and human rights issue. We see this fear articulated in statements such as, "All of this language and cultural business may cause conflict and destructive disservice." In fact, conflict and destruction occur in schools, notwithstanding bilingual education. However, systematic inquiry into innovative approaches can document many instances in which conflict is dissipated or where "healthy tension" results in

less damage to the education of students. Rather than offering simplistic solutions--which usually are no solutions at all--the set of tools and techniques set forth below can assist people in analyzing and solving their own problems. They can be used by mainstream and minority alike, lay person and professional researcher, school personnel and parents, to learn more about how culture influences the educational process and to apply this knowledge in changing the system in areas where it needs to be changed.

The techniques and methods described herein may not be new to some and may appear totally unfamiliar to others. Parents and teachers do not usually see themselves as researchers, yet systematic inquiry is central to power relationships and change involving schools and communities. Participation, observation, interviewing, life history, and the other techniques discussed in the following pages are merely useful tools to be used by people who want to become active in studying and/or changing existing conditions and situations.

The methodological tools and techniques described in the following pages, used together with the conceptual tools for understanding and demystifying the concept of culture presented in Monograph I (Arvizu and Snyder, 1978), are intended to help parents and teachers[1] learn more about the culture of schools and about the total context of schooling. Particular attention is given to the influence of culture on the educational[2] process. The tools and techniques presented are

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[1] We use the term "teachers" to mean those formally employed by a school: classroom teachers, aides, administrators, and other educational personnel. Of course, many teachers also are parents and all parents are themselves teachers, having primary responsibility for the education of their children.

[2] The terms "education" and "educational" are used here to refer to the formal educational process, i.e., schooling. The terms also refer to learning which occurs outside of the formal curriculum. The authors' meaning will be clear from the context.

those most commonly used by anthropologists to study culture, for example, observation, participation, event analysis. These same techniques can also be used effectively by non-anthropologists who wish to learn more about their own culture or the culture of others, and who wish to use the acquired knowledge to improve educational practice. It is an assumption of the authors that if bilingual/cross cultural education projects are to achieve the goals of equal educational opportunity and quality education for all students, then teachers, parents, and all those responsible for the schooling of children need to develop skills and competencies for making educational programs more relevant to their clients.

The methodological tools provide a technical means for pursuing humanistic goals in a systematic and scientific manner. They can be used by many different types of people to carry out many different kinds of studies. For example, the tools and techniques can be used by:

1) Teachers who wish to become more culturally self-aware;

2) Bilingual teachers and teacher aides who wish to learn more about the communities from which their students come, or about those communities or groups of individuals who are opposed to bilingual education;

3) Parents and community agencies who wish to study schooling and learn more about the schools their children attend;

4) Advocates of bilingual/cross cultural education who wish to take a qualitative approach to documenting and evaluating the impact of bilingual projects in their school districts;

5) Any educator who wants to know more about how anthropological fieldwork techniques can be applied to education;

6) Public servants employed in such fields as health, criminal justice, and welfare whose work brings them into contact with diverse language and ethnic groups.

The techniques are not intended to develop technocrats. Rather, they are intended to assist those who wish to employ an anthropological approach to solving culturally-based problems, particularly school problems. We must advise our readers, however, that what makes an approach anthropological is not simply the use of these techniques, but systematic attention in carrying out fieldwork[3] to the variables of culture, comparativeness and holism[4].

We must also caution our readers that in attempting to demystify anthropological fieldwork we run the risk of oversimplification. This short monograph provides uninitiated researchers with information about how to begin doing cross cultural field research. It does not, however, deal adequately with all aspects of the anthropological research process. Nor does it take the place of doing fieldwork. No written presentation of "how to do it" can be a substitute for actually practicing the techniques. To gain competence as an interviewer, for example, a person must carry out many interviews. To suggest otherwise is akin to teaching someone to swim without taking him/her into the water. For this reason we include LEARNING PROJECTS at various points throughout the monograph which we encourage our readers to pursue, or to use as models for designing their own projects.

We also mention as illustrations some needs and problems which are pertinent to particular school/community settings and which can be understood and alleviated through the use of fieldwork techniques.

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[3]Active use of the methodological tools and techniques constitutes what anthropologists call "fieldwork".

[4]For a fuller discussion of these concepts, see Monograph I (Arvizu and Snyder, 1978).

Additional areas of concern will undoubtedly be identified by teachers, parents, and students which are more applicable to their specific situations.

Culturally Based Educational Problems

The following is an example of a culturally-based educational problem. Many people who have worked with Native Americans have found themselves stymied and frustrated by an apparent lack of responsiveness on the part of Indian students to teacher-initiated questions. Among the Oglala Sioux, fieldworkers have observed long and sometimes embarrassing periods of silence in the classroom. Outside of the classroom, however, fieldworkers observed Sioux children to be "noisy, bold, daring, and insatiably curious" (Dumont 1972:345). After extensive research in both school and community, the fieldworkers concluded that in the classroom Sioux children made a conscious effort not to speak out when called upon by the teacher. A display of individual talents was seen by the children as belittling the talents of other students. This example highlights the contrast between the Anglo-American culture, where high value is placed on individual student initiative, competition and achievement, and Sioux culture, where the same behavior is considered unacceptable and even immoral.

Cultural differences can produce misunderstanding and conflict between students and school personnel, as the following Chicano examples illustrate. Chicano parents, in some cases, will keep a child home from school to interpret for them, or to care for younger siblings. Not understanding the reasons for the absence, the school labels such children truants and, if the "misbehavior" persists, punishes them with suspension from school.

Chicano youngsters also get in trouble for violating the school's rules of "play space" when they conflict with directions given at home. Parents say: "cuida a tus hermanitos allá en la escuela" ("take care of your younger brothers and sisters while in school"). School authorities say "big children shouldn't bother little children on the playground". As older siblings obey parents and check on the younger brother or sister, they are told by the playground monitor not to be a bully (for wanting to play with younger children). Other common examples of culturally-based school problems are the giving of demerits to Chicano students in physical education class for adhering to their cultural code of privacy of body (not to undress in front of others) or the suspension of Chicano students for dressing at school the way it is done in the barrio.

Not all culturally-based school problems are of this negative type. The underutilization of parents and community elders as cultural and educational resources in the classroom constitutes a critical problem. Because parents do not know how to approach the school to ask for information or to offer assistance, and the teacher does not know how to approach parents to ask for their cooperation or assistance, an opportunity for home-school linkage is missed. Parents and grandparents of students in bilingual/cross cultural projects are a rich educational resource. Their historical knowledge and personal life experiences can be incorporated into learning materials which are appropriate and useful in the classroom.

Even though bilingual education legislation (ESEA, Title VII) requires parental participation and involvement in bilingual projects and even though parents themselves are interested in working to improve the teaching/learning experiences of their children, many parents do

not know what the range of potential roles and responsibilities for them might be, or how their ideas can be translated into classroom practice. These parents need tools and techniques which will help them learn about the culture of schools. Similarly, school personnel need to learn about the cultural background of their students in order to build closer home-school linkages.

A related problem, which the use of fieldwork techniques can alleviate, is the assumption of many parents that school personnel are the experts and, therefore, that they are not receptive to a parent's idea. Many parents are afraid or embarrassed to approach teachers. It is the authors' hope that in using the methodological tools, parents and teachers will come to see themselves and one another as both knowers and non-knowers, each having much which they can contribute to the education of young people.

It is easy for an outsider to misinterpret the reasons behind a Sioux student's silence in the classroom, a Chicano child's violation of school rules, or a parent's reluctance to become involved in school affairs. School personnel, like parents and students, perceive and behave according to their own cultural patterns. It is hardly surprising, then, that teachers and other educators frequently misinterpret the behavior of parents or students whose cultural backgrounds they do not share. Failure to communicate across cultural boundaries is a familiar problem for anyone who has lived or worked in cross cultural situations.

Communication Project

Identify instances of crisis between your school and your community this past year. Were there different groups involved? Did they have different ways of doing things? Who mediated the problem? Were the mediators proficient in the different "worlds" involved and able to facilitate information flow and understanding? In the direction of which groups? What kinds of skills can you identify as useful for resolving some of the conflicts and crises you have identified?

In bilingual/cross cultural education, as in any other innovative projects, some tension is bound to occur. Where there is no tension, it is unlikely that anything new or significant is occuring. When people from diverse cultural backgrounds are brought together, they inevitably will not share all the same values or operate according to all the same standards for appropriate behavior.

Educators must be sensitive to the fact that not all children learn to socialize in the same manner. The rules for when a child (or adult) should speak or be silent, observe or participate, work independently or perform as a team member will vary from culture to culture. Parents, teachers, and other educators can utilize anthropological field techniques to collect data from both the classroom and the community which will assist them in analyzing cultural systems--their own and those of others. This knowledge will make it possible for them to begin understanding when and where the standards used by the school, the teacher, the parent, and the student coincide, compete, or conflict.

TECHNIQUES

Fieldworkers employ a variety of techniques or mechanisms for collecting cultural data. There is general consensus within the discipline of anthropology about how the techniques are to be used and about the types of information they can provide. In the pages which follow, we present the most basic techniques, including a discussion of (1) their purposes and strengths; (2) the steps involved in using them; (3) the limitations of the various techniques and some cautions about their use; and (4) suggested learning projects to give the reader practice in using the techniques, both individually and collectively.

PARTICIPATION

Fieldwork is both a solitary process, involving observation, reflection, and recording of information, and a social process, involving interviewing and participation. Fieldwork requires direct, first-hand contact with the people in the culture. Traditionally, fieldworkers immerse themselves in the lives of the local people[5], participating in their day-to-day activities and in their special events. Participation often involves accommodation by both the fieldworker(s) and the local people. Consider the case of parents wanting to learn about the schools. Their very presence can cause anxiety among school personnel. The process of getting acquainted and establishing rapport is essential, and it must be thought out and

[5]The term "local people" is used to mean the people whose culture is being studied, for example, a particular neighborhood, the staff of a school, students in a bilingual classroom, a parent advisory board.

approached sensitively, taking into account the local history and the current cultural conditions.

Participation is a strategy for learning the skills and behaviors central to the culture being studied. By doing the same thing that local people do--following their daily routine, doing their work, eating their food, speaking their language, for proper behavior--one gains the competencies necessary to participate appropriately in their culture. Participating also allows one to experience emotionally another manner of doing things, to appreciate a different perspective of life, and to learn, by contrast, from that experience.

Participation helps fieldworkers understand the culture from the perspective of an insider (or if already an insider, to deepen that understanding). As noted in Monograph I (Arvizu and Snyder, 1978), an insider's perspective differs from that of an outsider's. Both perspectives are important for understanding cultural diversity. By participating in group activities, cultural behavior which at first may seem different or confusing, will in time become commonplace and understandable. Referring again to the Sioux, ongoing participation in a Sioux community would enable non-Sioux fieldworkers to gradually see the world from a Sioux point of view, thus coming to the realization that from the perspective of the Sioux, silence is in some instances the most appropriate response to a teacher's verbal inquiry. Isolated events and actions, like the Sioux students' reluctance to perform publically in front of their peers, become comprehensible as part of a complex cultural system. When viewed as a whole the total system seems entirely reasonable.

Participation is essential for building rapport and for overcoming any anxieties which local people have about their culture

being scrutinized. Through extensive participation in the activities of the school/community under study, fieldworkers can establish themselves as something more than outsiders, thus increasing the likelihood of people behaving as they always do, even in the fieldworkers' presence. Building rapport is a critical aspect of successful fieldwork. Without it, local people will be guarded in their behavior and reluctant to freely share information about their culture.

How to Participate

The steps involved in participating in a culture are closely related to the purposes for becoming involved. The following are major aspects of how to go about it:

(1) Attend school/community events. Initially it may be difficult for fieldworkers who are outsiders to become actively involved in the private lives of the "host" school/community, but it is usually possible to participate in public events such as school board meetings, an open house, fairs, sporting events, plays, parades, or even religious ceremonies.

(2) Get to know local people. Meeting with people from the community and visiting them in their homes indicates an interest in learning about their culture and in sharing ideas with them. Meeting with people from the school and visiting them at non-school times and places allows one to gain their confidence and to see their world outside of work.

(3) Use the local language. Learning the local language and using it even if people speak one's own language, not only can enhance communication, but it also demonstrates the fieldworker's genuine interest in learning about the local culture. In the case of

studying schools, professional educators many times develop their own "jargon" of terms and phrases. Parents need to learn this new language in order to communicate with school people and to gain clues as to how they see their world, for example, tardy slips, "management system", "cum" cards, and hall passes. Using the local language helps to build rapport and promote acceptance of the fieldworker in the school or community.

(4) Be sensitive to local standards. Awareness of local standards, for example, those related to manners, time, and food, helps fieldworkers demonstrate their sensitivity to local beliefs and practices and their desire to understand them. Most public schools, like most communities, have written and unwritten rules at work in their operation, for example, parking spaces, dress codes, protocol on how to address one another, and other aspects of rank and prestige.

Local people will generally recognize and accept that non-local fieldworkers have different standards of dress, hairstyle, speech, etc., and will allow them to behave in accordance with their own standards, providing they are respectful of local customs and their behavior is not loaded with negative connotations when viewed through insiders' eyes. For example, in India, a Hindu understands that Westerners do not share their beliefs about the sacredness of the cow and that non-Hindus enjoy beef as a normal part of their diet. However, an orthodox Hindu might consider a fieldworker highly disrespectful for wearing leather sandals into a Hindu household. An example more familiar to U.S. educators is the teacher who appreciates that parents are not familiar with school culture, but nevertheless, becomes emotionally upset when a well-intentioned parent arrives in the classroom unannounced to observe or to offer assistance with the

lessons.

Fieldworkers who wish to "go native" and abide by all local customs must be sensitive to the implications of their behavior. If western fieldworkers, immediately upon arrival in India, were to adopt Indian dress styles, it would appear ridiculous or even presumptuous. It would imply an insider's status when no such status had been conferred, and might thus interfere with the good will which fieldworkers wished to convey. By the same token, if a teacher wore "Frisco" jeans and a blu work shirt to meet with Chicano parents, it might appear discourteous and uninformed as to the expectations of the parents, who expect professional dress, as well as being unnatural to the dress habit of the teacher involved. In time, however, as rapport and mutual respect increase, fieldworkers can expect to find themselves accepted more and more as insiders, or at least, not as total outsiders. As a result they, like all insiders, will be judged by local standards.

Mastering standards in regard to food and dress is much easier than mastering local thought patterns. It is through participation and speaking the local language, that fieldworkers can begin to understand how local people see their world. Eventually, through close and continuous interaction, they can come to share the deeper meanings and feelings of the local people. In other words, they will know not only that among Hindus beef is taboo, but also why it is taboo and how Hindus feel about it. Similarly, parents become more aware of how a school functions and accept why it operates as it does, while helping teachers, at the same time, understand the ways of the surrounding community.

Warnings About Participating

Becoming involved means having to take sides. A participant cannot remain neutral in disputes or even in expressing opinions. In all likelihood those engaged in fieldwork will alienate themselves from some local people as they become identified with others. Consequently, they may find themselves closed off from participating freely with certain groups of people. If fieldworkers, for example, are known to favor bilingual education, they may find that opponents to bilingual projects are reluctant to share their views. For this reason certain types of information can be better collected in the early stages of fieldwork before fieldworkers have been identified with a particular set of opinions and beliefs.

For the school practitioner carrying out community fieldwork, there is the added danger that local people will have certain expectations about what teachers should believe and how they should behave. Fieldworkers need to be sensitive to how others see them. If, for example, some parents or community members assume that school people do not really want to know how they feel or hear what they have to say, then, they might be reluctant to take their time with fieldworkers who also are school practitioners. However, most people will be willing to inform fieldworkers after they have had opportunities to observe them and to determine that they are genuinely interested in learning. By participating in new situations, where familiar ways of dealing with problems are either inappropriate or do not work, fieldworkers have an opportunity to add to their strategies for interacting with people and to learn from those experiences.

Participation Project

1. Identify a public event in a community, group, or school where you are likely to be considered an "outsider."
2. If possible, attend the event in the company of an "insider."
3. Ask an insider to explain what you should know and do during the event.
4. Participate in the event, where appropriate, by imitating the behavior of insiders.
5. Learn how to introduce yourself and take leave from the groups in their language.
6. After the event is over, discuss with your host(s) the form (structure, stages, procedures), meaning (significance to those participating), and function of the event (what the event does for the totality of that community, school or group.) What did you do that did not fit; what did you do that seemed to gain approval?

The more involved fieldworkers become as participants, the more difficult it becomes for them to step aside and view the situation with some detachment and objectivity. Yet, the essence of anthropological fieldwork is not participation alone, but the combination of participation and observation, involvement and detachment.

OBSERVATION

In the process of participating, fieldworkers will inevitably find themselves observing what is going on. While participation requires personal involvement, social interaction and face-to-face relationships, observation requires a certain amount of separation and detachment from what is taking place to permit reflection and analysis. Observation is an individual process, while participation is a social process. The key for successful anthropological

fieldwork is to balance the two techniques, becoming both observer and participant, audience and actor. Fieldworkers who are outsiders to the group, may find that observation at first is an easier role than participation. Similarly, insiders carrying out research on their own community may find it easy to participate but more difficult to stand back and observe. Both roles are essential to successful fieldwork.

The combination of these two techniques in fieldwork is one of the distinguishing aspects of anthropological research. In psychology, the researcher relies heavily upon the technique of observation with little or no concern for participation. Using the extreme case, a researcher might observe children at play through a one-way mirror. The researcher can observe the children but they are not even aware that they are being watched. When psychologists interact with subjects under study, they frequently structure the situation as a test. Anthropologists, on the other hand, observe people in completely natural situations without any artificial stimuli and learn from them as they go about their normal day-to-day activities.

The purposes for using the technique of observation are basically the same as those for participating. Through observation, fieldworkers gain knowledge about other groups or cultures. They can learn new roles and behaviors, not only by doing, (participating) but also by watching and listening and by reflecting upon what they see and hear.

In the process of observing over a period of time, fieldworkers come to see cultural patterns of behavior as distinct from behavior idiosyncratic to particular individuals. They see the commonalities and the diversity within a group which shares a common culture. Further, they increase their awareness of their own culture and how

it is both similar and different from the culture they are studying.

If, for example, Anglo-Americans only interact with those who share beliefs in individual achievement and competition, they are unlikely to be aware that these values are not shared by others outside their normal circle of acquaintences, nor are they likely to be conscious of individual achievement as a value which supports and which is a guide to their actions. If they were to carry out fieldwork in a Native American community, they would learn that great value is attached to group achievement and that individual achievement, if it signifies one person excelling over another, is considered immoral behavior.

In a similar fashion, parents can use observation techniques to become aware of the diversity of values among parent groups or between parents and teachers. School personnel can become sensitive to the ways their own values influence their teaching styles or see instances where their values differ from those of their students. Observation allows one to begin a process of critical reflection.

How To Observe

In cross cultural situations, fieldworkers are likely to experience feelings of confusion and frustration because they don't understand what is going on, do not understand clearly what is expected of them or how others are reacting to them. It is possible for them to experience feelings of hostility, depression and failure. The feelings generally occur because of differences between fieldworkers' values and those of local people. Such feelings can be used as indicators of areas of differences between the fieldworkers' culture and the culture of those they are studying.

When fieldworkers are outsiders they may find local values and beliefs a threat to their own, or may feel insecure because they do not know how to behave properly and cannot predict how others will respond to them. The anthropological term for these feelings in an aggravated form is culture shock. By signaling areas of cultural contrast, the fieldworkers' discomfort can be used as a tool for gaining insight into a new culture. Once cultural differences are observed, fieldworkers need to ask themselves what is taking place in local terms, why people do what they do, what their underlying values and purposes are, and how they feel about it. Successful fieldworkers constantly ask "what are these people doing, why, and what does it mean to them?".

It is important to question one's own assumptions and understandings about what is observed since the same behavior may have very different meanings in different cultures. For example, Anglo children are taught to look directly at their parents when they are being reprimanded. To look away is considered disrespectful. Conversely, Puerto Rican children are taught by their parents "to look 'respectfully' down when being chastised..."(Byers and Byers 1972:20). Thus, in one culture, children who avoid eye contact with a chastising adult are signifying respect, while in the other they may be indicating disrespect.

Successful ethnographic observation requires a conceptual framework for deciding what is relevant, and must be recorded, and what should be ignored. A framework helps fieldworkers sort and organize what they observe and helps them transform isolated observations into patterns (see Monograph I, Arvizu and Snyder, 1978). In addition to developing a pragmatic conceptual framework, fieldworkers must also

be specific about their general research topic and design research questions which will guide their observations.[6]

Warnings About Observing

The fieldworkers' own anxieties, biases, and limited knowledge will distort what they see and hear. Fieldworkers cannot be totally objective but they can attempt to recognize their anxieties and biases and take them into account when reflecting upon their observations and drawing conclusions from them. One useful way to check for bias is to ask local people for feedback on the accuracy of one's observations.

Fieldworkers must also be sensitive to the anxieties of those they are observing and take into consideration how their anxieties may affect their behavior. If local people are confused about fieldworkers' purposes or if they feel uncomfortable or suspicious about being observed, they will tend to alter their "normal" behavior. For example, when the principal or supervisor comes into a classroom to observe, the teacher may plan a very special set of activities, not typical at all of the normal routine. Teachers may also become nervous while under observation and, therefore, deviate from an average day's behavior. Their performance in such cases will be atypical. Similar situations may arise when fieldworkers do school/community observation and this is one of the reasons that observation needs to be combined with participation. People tend to forget that fieldworkers are observers when they also are participants.

Particularly pertinent to fieldworkers who are studying their

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[6] For further discussion of "deciding what to study," see later section of the monograph describing the major phases in a research project.

own communities is the warning that the cultural setting will seem familiar and understandable and, therefore, the task of fieldwork is more difficult. A newcomer has the advantage of seeing in a different light things which insiders may take for granted. Like the small child who incessantly is asking "why," the newcomer can question everything, and, as noted in connection with culture shock, it is our very ability to distinguish differences between "our" culture and the culture under study that leads to cultural insight and description.

Observation Project

1. Choose a recreation site frequented by a group which speaks a language or jargon you do not understand. For a teacher, this could be children at play in a non-school setting; for a parent, this might be observation of a school playground; for an administrator this could be a social event in the service-area community.

2. Describe the physical setting and spacing of the people.

3. Observe the interaction over a fifteen minute period, noting details of appearance, action and communication, both verbal and non-verbal.

4. Within the hour write down your impressions of the more commonly observed behaviors.

5. One day later, ask yourself why you noted the things you noted. What conceptual framework were you using to select and reject details as noteworthy?

6. If you were viewing the cultural interaction of the recreation site from a perspective of (a) an "insider" or (b) an "outsider", how would the two perspectives differ (see Monograph I)? What questions and observations would you have?

7. Consider the interaction observed in terms of "implicit" as well as "explicit" culture (see Monograph I). Can you identify some of the underlying values and attitudes guiding the observed behaviors?

Comparative Observation

Not everything that the fieldworker observes as different or interesting will turn out to be a generalizable cultural pattern. It may be that a particular behavior or action is peculiar to one individual or one situation, or that the meaning attached to a particular event or action is quite erroneous. For example, in doing fieldwork in the West Indies, one of the authors had occasion to attend a funeral for a prominent member of the community. She observed that the hymn singing was not accompanied by an organ, even though at regular Sunday morning services there was organ music. In questioning a local informant about the meaning of the lack of use of organs at funerals, it turned out that the church's electricity was off due to a power failure! At the next funeral there was an organist. Another example of the need for comparative observation is the parent who visits a bilingual classroom for only part of the day, hears instruction occuring only in Spanish and decides that his or her child is not being taught any English. Without asking questions about when English is taught and without visiting at other times (or even in other classrooms) the parents cannot know how representative and reliable their observations are.

These anecdotes are used to illustrate the importance of comparative observation. Fieldworkers will note a particular behavior in one situation which they will want to pursue, either in different situations or in similar situations occuring at different points in time. This will help fieldworkers determine the generalizability of their observations. To carry out comparative observation, it is necessary to set up a systematic check list of what is to be observed,

when, where, and how often, etc. If this procedure is not followed, fieldworkers will accumulate reams of notes which will be difficult to analyze and organize into useful conclusions.

Comparative Observation Project

1. Observe a school staff meeting, making notes on spacing, social interaction, and roles of those present.
2. Observe a parent advisory council meeting, making notes on spacing, social interaction, and roles of those attending.
3. Compare the two settings and situations. What similarities/differences did you observe? Analyze the implications for a possible role as a mediator and broker between the two groups.

RECORDING

Part of the fieldwork process, as already suggested, is recording the information one gathers. This can be done by taking notes, photographs, and tape recordings, and through the collection of documents and "objects" made by the local people. The use of notebooks, cameras, tape recorders and other specialized equipment will be determined, in part, by the types of information needed to answer research questions, the cost and time involved, the skill of the fieldworkers, and the informants' feelings about having pictures taken or their interviews and activities recorded.

In cases where such sensitivity exists, the use of the primary instrument for recording information, the human one, (mental notes that eventually are written down and stored for later use) is invaluable. Written notes, as a tool, are an essential part of most fieldwork projects. It is neither possible nor desirable to commit everything one learns to memory. It is useful to write observations,

questions, ideas and interview information.

Fieldworkers' notes become the record to which they can refer at some later date to see if all their earlier questions have been answered. They also serve as the documentation for explaining how they have arrived at their conclusions and recommendations. Judgements based on recorded "evidence" carry more weight than those based solely on feelings, hunches, and recollections.

The process by which fieldworkers eventually arrive at their insights and understandings is documented also by note-taking. The natural outcome, in the course of carrying out fieldwork, is change. Fieldworkers not only gain new knowledge and skills, but also become aware of different perspectives and new ways of looking at events. Notes serve as a diary, providing a record of how we are changed by fieldwork. In many cases the changes occur without our even being conscious of them.

How To Record

Note-taking is generally an individual matter, and as long as one records all the data needed for analysis at some later date, it is not of great importance which procedure is followed. . In a group project, however, it is necessary for notes to be sufficiently clear and complete to enable other team members to make use of them.

There are certain steps common to most note-taking, which may be useful to the novice fieldworker. Some projects will be possible with less rigorous and systematic note-taking.

(1) Record basic details such as date, time, place, general setting, and people involved.

(2) Be descriptive rather than abstract or evaluative. One's

notes are the "facts" to substantiate opinions and judgments. Facts document how conclusions were reached. In taking notes, it is important to avoid terms that have multiple meanings or are ambiguous in nature. If the note says "most of the children's parents live in small, older homes," it would not be clear how many is "most", or what actually is meant by "small" or "older." Similarly, if the note refers to the large class size, it is not clear whether the class is "large," judged by the fieldworker's standards or the informant's own. The two may differ.

Terms which describe a person's feelings should also be documented with descriptive evidence. If a note says that so and so was "hostile," or "disrespectful," or "angry," supporting details are needed to explain why the fieldworker used these terms. Without such details, it will not be possible later to compare multiple situations not to correct inaccurate judgments. For example, if the fieldworker recorded that a certain child was observed to behave "disrespectfully" to the teacher, without further explanation, the notes would be insufficient for later analysis. What exactly did the child do? From whose perspective was it disrespectful, the fieldworker's, the teacher's, fellow students', the child himself? As noted in the earlier example of the child looking down when scolded by an adult, the same behavior may have different meanings to different people.

(3) Take <u>complete</u> notes. As the above example indicates, incomplete notes do not allow opportunities for correction or re-analysis, nor do they supply enough of the context to know how judgments or conclusions were reached. No matter how good one's memory is, observations must be recorded accurately. Some observation or comment that stands out at the moment may become blurred, distorted, or even

forgotten over time. Field notes may turn out only to be useful if they are full and accurate.

(4) Record direct quotations. Note which remarks are paraphrased and which quoted exactly. In many cases it is desirable to have a record of exactly what was said. Through paraphrasing, the fieldworker may accidently change the meaning.

(5) Take notes immediately. Write down observations, questions, interview data, etc., as they occur or as soon as time permits to avoid forgetting important points and to minimize the distortion which comes with time. This improves the reliability of the data.

(6) Devise a systematic way of keeping notes, dating and numbering pages, signing the notes if there are multiple fieldworkers. Recording certain specifics about the people involved for later comparative analysis by sex, age, ethnic identity, social status, or other observations fieldworkers consider to be important variables.

(7) Record the context. Notes should include not only what was said, or observed, or learned, but also the setting and circumstances in which it was learned.

(8) Make notes focused. Information which is considered noteworthy will depend on the general research problem, the specific research questions, and the fieldworkers' conceptual framework for approaching the research. Recorded notes, without a framework of reference, will tend to be random, fragmented and ultimately may turn out to be quite meaningless. Their purpose for uncovering any cultural patterns will be lost.

(9) Maintain the confidentiality and trust of those who share information with you. Keep all notes in a safe place. Protect the

rights of those with whom you work.

(10) Share summarized versions of notes with informants for feedback and accuracy.

Warnings About Note-Taking

Unfocused note-taking, as stated above, can result in reams of meaningless data. It can also lead to volumes of fieldnotes that never get organized or analyzed, due to repetition and mere quantity. To avoid this pitfall it is helpful to keep asking, "Why am I taking these particular notes?" "How might I use this information later on?" "How can I go about analyzing it?" Keep in mind that it takes time to organize and analyze fieldnotes.

To minimize the time required for analysis at the end of the fieldwork and to be sure that the necessary data are recorded, it is desirable part way through a field project to take stock of where one is. The result could be that enough data have already collected, or that gaps exist which need to be filled, or that observations need further clarification and elaboration.

Finally, as noted earlier, fieldworkers must be sensitive both to their own observational biases and to the anxieties and biases of local people. Any type of recording device, even the smallest of notebooks, may inhibit people from behaving naturally or speaking openly. Many a fieldworker has found that a conversation really begins to flow only after the notebook is closed. Some of the most worthwhile information is gathered in the most casual circumstances--almost accidentally--at a party, on the street corner, over drinks, etc. There will be times when note-taking and recording are neither necessary nor appropriate, as, for example, in interacting with people

on matters of a personal or confidential nature. When a fieldworker does take notes, it is essential to ask permission of those being observed or interviewed.

Note-Taking Project

1. Describe your school, noting physical objects of significance to you.
2. If you are a teacher, have non-teachers, possibly students or parents, observe the same location and compare notes. If you are a parent, have a teacher or student observe the same location and compare notes.
3. Ask several people of the same group (several teachers, or parents, or students) to describe the significant features of the school and have them explain why these features are significant. This might be approached by asking people with different years of familiarity for explanation to get a "time" perspective. (See Monograph I for views of culture as "fixed" and "changing.")
4. Note the contrasts. Are there insider and outsider perspectives? Does length of time, role and/or proximity affect what people say is significant or meaningful? Has a comparative view helped you get a more complete picture of how people see the school?

INTERVIEWING

Conversational give-and-take is a natural part of being involved in community and school life. For the outsider who is studying a new culture or group, it is both normal and necessary to ask questions about how things are done locally, why they are done in a certain way, if they have always been this way, if everyone does them this way (or if some people have different ways of doing things), and what meanings people attach to the things they do. Participating involves both learning by doing and by asking questions.

An important aspect of the anthropological approach to fieldwork is the relationship which researchers have with local people and their roles in the research. Local people are the teachers; fieldworkers are learners. In anthropological research anyone who provides information to fieldworkers is called an "informant," i.e., one who informs and provides insights into local culture. Fieldworkers try to see the world as their informants see it and to describe their culture in such a way that local people will consider the descriptions accurate.

People generally welcome questions that demonstrate an interest in learning about their school, group or culture, their opinions, how they feel about various issues and situations, how they go about doing things, and so forth. As already noted, however, it takes time to build up trust and rapport. For this reason, usually it is not advisable for fieldworkers to ask sensitive or controversial questions until they have gained the confidence of the local people. Fieldwork naturally takes place over an extended period of time. It takes time to arrive at a point where it is possible to ask the important questions.

Asking questions, or interviewing, is an essential fieldwork technique. There are two main types of interviewing--informal and formal. Informal interviewing has already been discussed in connection with asking questions as part of the day-to-day participation process. Some of the best information is gathered through informed give-and-take.

In the course of fieldwork there will be times when fieldworkers wish to gather interview data in a planned and systematic manner. Formal interviews are required when it is necessary to ask

specific questions or seek out specific people to be informants. Formal interviews need not be formal in structure. They also may be very casual and seemingly unplanned. For example, fieldworkers may simply begin the interview with a very open-ended question on a topic of interest and the interview unfolds from there, without fieldworkers structuring the direction it takes.

On the other hand, there are occasions when fieldworkers find it necessary to structure an interview to be sure that they ask a specific set of questions. In some cases a written interview schedule (list of questions) will prove useful. Having a specific list of interview questions does not necessarily mean that the questions themselves are highly structured. Questions can run the gamut from very open-ended, e.g., "tell me about school," to very closed, e.g., "what subjects do you take at school?"

Anthropologists usually do not develop structured interview schedules or ask "closed" questions until they have learned enough about the local culture to know what the "right" questions are, how they should be worded, and the manner in which they should be asked. In a similar manner, a teacher learning about community culture or a parent learning about school culture will need to begin with informal, open-ended interview questions, moving gradually, over time, to more formal and specifically focused questions.

The type of interview techniques selected by fieldworkers will depend on the nature of the information they are seeking. If they wish to find out what their informants think is important, they will let the informants guide the conversation. If instead, fieldworkers wish to seek clarification on specific topics they already have determined to be of interest, they will wish to guide the interview to a particular

set of questions.

An essential part of the fieldwork process is asking the right questions. Much of the success of the fieldwork endeavor depends on fieldworkers' skills as interviewers, including their ability to think of the right questions to ask of themselves, as well as of informants. When informants do not answer a question addressed directly to them, the chances are that there is something wrong with the question itself or with the way it is presented, including non-verbal aspects of communication. Fieldworkers must be sensitive at all times to how their questions are being received.

Another relevant aspect of the interview process is the selection of informants. In terms of quality of information, it often is not the questions per se that matter, or how they are asked, but rather who is being interviewed. Not everyone is an equally capable informant.

Key Informant Interviewing

Fieldworkers often rely on key informants to teach them about the local culture and to help them become knowledgeable enough to ask the right questions. In the course of participating in the life of the school/community, fieldworkers may identify certain people as their major teachers. Not all informants are equally knowledgeable about all aspects of local culture. Only certain individuals have specialized knowledge (e.g., know the inner workings of the school board or the symbolism of Día de los Muertos); other individuals may prove to be better informed all around. The type of key informant fieldworkers seek out depends both on their specific research interests and on who in the school/community is willing to play the key informant role.

Not everyone is willing to form a close association with a

researcher. The selection of one's key informants is a reciprocal process. The key informant is someone with whom the fieldworker can participate in school/community life, who can provide an insider's perspective, and who can provide historical information through an informal give-and-take process, which usually is not available through more structured types of interaction. Once again, rapport is essential. Rapport and trust are established after the key informant and fieldworker have spent time together in a variety of situations and had many opportunities to exchange points of views in casual conversations.

Fieldworkers should select key informants carefully. Ideally, they will be people who are knowledgeable about their culture, particularly those aspects integral to the research topic. Additionally, the best informants are those willing to share information about their culture (not all are) and able to verbalize about and reflect upon local culture (again, not all are equally able to do so).

Combining key informant interviewing with participation in the local culture provides a system of checks and balances. Each not only supplements the other, but also, one may clarify the other. When fieldworkers do not understand something that was said or done, they ask a key informant, perhaps finding out that they had misinterpreted an event. Conversely, a key informant's exaggeration or embellishment of some event can be balanced by the fieldworker's personal observation of it. Like everyone else, key informants' interpretations and evaluations are influenced to some extent by personal bias.

Learning about a group or culture from key informants can be a long, slow process. It is similar to a friendship relationship and requires fieldworkers to set aside their detachment and become involved in their informants' lives. In spending hours together the fieldworker

will frequently discover that their questions are answered without ever asking them or that the opportune moment arises to ask questions of particular interest. The use of key informants is more than an interviewing technique. Some interviewing goes on but so do a great many other things. Key informants and fieldworkers generally view their relationship as one of friendship (not that of researcher and informant). The fieldworker must be sensitive to the cultural expectations and obligations incurred by this favored status.

As a friend, it will be very natural for a key informant to reveal to the fieldworker information which is sensitive and, perhaps, even confidential. The fieldworker should be careful to note what information is off-the-record and not for publication. If informants are not confident that the information they share will be treated appropriately, a feeling of uneasiness will develop and the relationship with the fieldworker will be affected, resulting in the lack of shared information. The fieldworker should also disguise the identity of key informants, altering any comments that might be traced back to them. Where it is impossible to hide an informant's identity, the fieldworker must either leave out the information, or get the informant's permission to reveal it.

Interview Project

1. Interview a school-aged person who is not enrolled in school, or someone who left school prior to completing twelfth grade, regarding:

   a. school experiences;
   b. work experiences;
   c. the transition from the role of student to the role of worker.

2. Have the interviewee compare learning at school, at work, and on the street/in the community.

Comparative Interviewing

The information provided by a single informant, including a key informant, may be idiosyncratic to the informant and it may also be biased. We have mentioned that combining participation and observation with interviewing provides a system of checks and balances. Another technique for checking the validity and reliability of the data gathered from informants is comparative interviewing. Like comparative observation, comparative interviewing provides the opportunity to pursue what was learned from one individual with a number of different individuals. Also, the preliminary information gathered from participant observation provides the fieldworker with the insights necessary for follow-up study activities like designing interviewing schedules and questionnaires. By asking the same questions of a number of informants, the fieldworker is able to document generalizable patterns of response. Potentially effective questions will have been identified in the course of participant observation and through conversations with key informants.

Fieldworkers should have a general feel for what the "correct" answers are before they develop interview schedules or questionnaires. Questions based on the faulty assumptions, will lead the fieldworker to faulty conclusions. For example, an interview question on ethnic identity which asked, "Do you consider yourself a Mexican, a Mexican-American, or an American?" would prove ineffective if some of the informants consider themselves Chicanos. Further, it may not be an either/or situation. In some instances the informants may also identify themselves as Mexicans, as Mexican-Americans, and as Americans. It would, therefore, be more effective to ask what each term means to the informants and to probe in an open-ended fashion the situations and circumstances in which they perceive themselves to be Chicano, American,

Mexican American, etc.

Comparative interviewing, like other interviewing techniques, can be structured or unstructured and the questions can be open-ended or closed. Which type of questioning is selected will depend on the type of information sought, how the data are to be analyzed, and whether the fieldworker is interested in information of a qualitative and/or quantitative nature.

In some instances, it may be desirable to select some sort of random sample of informants and to ask each of them a standard set of questions. In this way, it will be possible to compare their responses, to quantify at least some of the data, and to know with a fairly high degree of certainty that the patterns revealed are generalizable to the whole group or community.

In every case where a number of different people are interviewed, it is important to be conscious of how they were selected. Availability may be the most important factor, but then, the fieldworker must be careful not to generalize from informants who were readily available to some larger group of individuals, for example, all teachers, all parents, all Chicanos, all Anglos. Further and more systematic research will answer the questions of generalizability.

Comparative interviewing will reveal the diversity, as well as the similarity, among members of a cultural group. In those cases where survey techniques are used, it may be possible to replicate the study, in a different place, with a different or larger group of people, etc. Survey research, however, can never take the place of qualitative activities, such as participation, observation, and key informant interviewing.

The most successful fieldworkers combine a mixture of techniques

and types of data. In so doing, observations can be checked against the fieldworker's personal experience and against the statements of key informants. Also, the statements of informants can be checked one against another, and both against other types of supporting evidence, such as that which may be available in written documents and in cultural artifacts (school records, films or tapes of past events, community histories, etc.) made by local people.

Comparative Interviewing Project

A. Repeat the interview project suggested above. This time interview at least three or four out-of-school young people. Compare their responses. How are they similar? How are they different?

B. Interview, if possible, the teacher and the parent(s) of one of the interviewees. Compare their responses. Are their perspectives the same?

EVENT ANALYSIS

Using all the various techniques which together comprise participant observation, the fieldworker is in a position to do event analysis. An ongoing and natural part of fieldwork will be the analysis of both public and private events that take place in the school or community. We have already suggested this by noting that (a) participation means getting involved in both the day-to-day activities of local people and also in special school/community events, (b) observation means watching and listening and reflecting upon what is going on, (c) interviewing means asking questions to understand what it means from an insider's perspective, and (d) recording means writing down what is learned from all three of the other techniques.

Basically, the steps involved in event analysis are a combination

of those discussed thus far in the monograph. In recording the event in one's field diary, it may be useful to make notes on such matters as:

(1) The physical setting;

(2) Who the participants are, their age, sex, status in the community or any other details that may be important for analysis;

(3) How the participants are arranged spatially and how they interact during the event, since these details may provide important insights to what is taking place and how the various "actors" in the situation are related in terms of friendship or social status;

(4) What people are wearing (especially if any special dress is involved); what objects or symbols are used in the event; and what are the shared meanings attached to them;

(5) The sequence of events, noting who does what, when, how, with whom, and the duration of both sub-events and the total event;

(6) Anything that is countable, so that the fieldworker can support statements made later about "many" people attended, "almost everyone" took part, women cooked "special dishes", and so forth. If similar events occur in the future, such details will also enable the fieldworker to compare the two.

In addition to describing the event, the fieldworkers will wish to note down any points that they do not understand, points they wish to check later with informants, and their notions as to what it all means.

Finally, in analyzing the event, the fieldworkers will wish to ask people about what is occurring--who are those people and what are they

doing, why, what does it mean, what is that object, etc.? To the degree possible, such questions should be asked while the event is taking place. At some later date, fieldworkers can follow up with informants to discuss the event in more detail and to clarify aspects of it which remain unclear.

It is desirable to discuss events with more than one informant, both because there may be differences of opinion about its meaning and because different individuals will be knowledgeable about different aspects. Men and women, for example, may provide different insights. Also, it is only by comparative observation and comparative interviewing that the fieldworker can discover which opinions, beliefs, behaviors, etc. are unique to an individual (or event) and which are shared by other members of the community, school, or group.

Event Analysis Project

Attend any kind of event that is new to you: a bilingual class, a PTA or Parent Advisory Council, student council or school board meeting, or some ceremonial event of a cultural group different from your own (for example, a wedding, funeral, or special holiday celebration), etc.

1. Identify, learn, and use at least a few words in the local language or dialect (greetings and leave takings).
2. Participate in the event, making notes of your observations.
3. Ask people familiar with the event/ceremony about its form (structure, stages, procedures), function (what the event does for those participating as insiders), and meaning (its significance to the participants).
4. Read available descriptions or explanations of the event, especially historical material, to place the event in a time perspective.
5. Interview a key informant (participant) about the consistency or changes in the event over time.
6. Can you identify different things that you learned through participation? Observation? Asking questions? Do you still feel like an outsider?
7. What steps would you need to take to understand the event more fully and/or to feel like an insider?

LIFE HISTORY

Many techniques used in anthropological fieldwork are also used in other disciplines and, in some cases, have even been borrowed from them. For example, the concern with discovering and comparing cultural patterns, with participating in the lives of native peoples (rather than simply observing them), and with carrying out fieldwork over an extended period of time, are particularly characteristic of the anthropological approach. The techniques involved in survey research, mentioned in connection with comparative interviewing, have been borrowed from sociology. Another technique, one which anthropologists call "life history", shares many characteristics with the historian's use of biographical and autobiographical data.

A record of a person's life is a life history, whether the information comes from the informant or is reported by others. Life history is an effective technique for gaining a perspective over time about a culture.[7] It can add a time depth to a study which otherwise presents a fixed perspective, i.e., a perspective of one given point in time.

Life history provides a mechanism for describing both the changes and the continuities in a culture. Also, when a life history is made of a community elder, the information can be useful in illustrating the life cycle within a particular culture. While fieldworkers can observe and interview different people of different ages in the course of their work, this is different from the first-hand observation over time of the life cycle or culture change that an elder can provide.

Life histories also illustrate the diversity in roles, values, perspectives, and experiences of different individuals within one

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[7] See Monograph I for a discussion of fixed and changing perspectives on culture.

cultural grouping and assist fieldworkers in appreciating not only the commonalities but also the variation within a single culture. Moreover, they can provide in-depth examples of how people adapt to "real" problems, including, for example, problems related to cultural contact and conflict within school settings. Such insights are valuable, both for understanding and for solving culturally-based educational problems.

Life history information can be used to help build closer home-school linkages through introducing it into the curriculum. This can be accomplished by actually bringing elders into the classroom, by increasing the knowledge which educational personnel have about community culture and how it differs from school culture, and by helping teachers understand where home and school culture diverge and conflict.

How To Do Life Histories

There is no single set of procedures for doing a life history. In gathering in-depth, historial information about a single individual, fieldworkers might simply ask informants to tell about their life, either using a tape recorder and/or with the fieldworkers taking careful and complete notes. Slides or other pictures can be used to supplement and illustrate the story. In cases when the fieldworkers are not fluent in the informant's mother tongue, a competent interpreter should be used. After the story is recorded (in writing or on tape), the fieldworkers may need to do quite a bit of editing and interpreting to make the information understandable to outsiders who are not familiar with the culture.

Sometimes fieldworkers will find it desirable to help structure

the informant's story as it is being told, by asking questions to get at specific subjects or specific phases in the informant's life, or to seek clarification or amplification of a particular point. It is important, however, to be as non-directive as possible so that the story is shaped by the informant rather than by the fieldworker. A life history should reveal what the informant feels is important. Constant questions and interruptions will alter the account.

The use of the life history technique, like key informant interviewing, requires a great deal of rapport and trust. To provide the best setting for gathering a life story, fieldworkers should pick sites where their informants feel comfortable. Informants need to understand why their story is being recorded, how the information will be used, and who will read it. They should be given the opportunity to check over their stories to edit them as they wish. They should also know whether their identity will remain anonymous or whether their names will be used. Permission must always be obtained from the informants if names are to be used.

In some cases first-person life history accounts are supplemented with what others have to say about the informant, with the fieldworkers' own observations, and/or with written documents and photographs which provide illuminating details. In this way, the life history technique can draw upon many of the other techniques discussed earlier.

Fieldworkers should be sensitive to the informants' feelings and must avoid applying pressure to reveal information they prefer to keep confidential. Also, it is important for fieldworkers to share some of their own life and feelings to assure that the process is a reciprocal one.

As already suggested, life history is an excellent source for in-depth, qualitative information about a culture. Fieldworkers should be aware, however, that life stories are idiosyncratic and cannot be used to make generalizations about a culture. They can be used, however, to provide rich supporting details for cultural patterns that have been revealed through more representative means, such as comparative observation and comparative interviewing. It is also possible to collect a number of life histories and to analyze them comparatively, looking for common themes and patterns, as well as for differences.

Since a "complete" life story is a major undertaking, fieldworkers may wish instead to use life history techniques to gather data on only one aspect of or one period in an informant's life, such as years in school.

Life History Project

1. Do a life history on yourself, focusing on major events, crises, or significant people. Share material with colleagues and, where appropriate, with your students, children, or neighbors.
2. Conduct similar life history interviews with two other people, one male, one female.
3. Arrange an activity which brings an elder from the community to the school to tell his or her life story, with learners recording the information and cross-checking their notes for details and accuracy.
4. After becoming familiar with the technique, teach it to your students or children.
5. Ask them either to do life histories on themselves, on each other, or on their older relatives.

WRITTEN ESSAYS

Another technique which involves eliciting personal information from local people is the use of essays written by informants. Personal essays can provide rich, descriptive data about how informants see their culture and respond to it. Fieldworkers can request essays from individuals, or from groups of people. As noted, in connection with comparative observation and comparative interviewing, the collection of essays on a single topic from more than a few people is more effective if the fieldworker already has identified, through participant observation, the "right" questions or topics to pursue. Comparative analysis of the essays will reveal common themes and cultural patterns.

This technique is particularly useful for gathering data from students, who are accustomed to writing essays. Fieldworkers who also are teachers can request essays from their students or they can ask other teachers to request student essays on topics of interest.

Care should be taken not to invade the privacy of the students or their families by assigning topics of a sensitive nature. Also, the students should know how their essays will be used. For example, will they be read only by the fieldworker? Will they be quoted in a written report? Will the student be assured anonymity?

Fieldworkers should also ask themselves in advance: "How am I going to analyze the essays? What am I looking for? What will I do with the information?" It can prove extremely time consuming to analyze reams of written materials, especially those that do not lend themselves to quantification, and it may be that one or two essays, rather than twenty or thirty, will suffice for the topic.

Essay Projects

1. Through class discussion or interviewing, determine several topics of interest to a group of students which you feel will reveal cultural patterns. Examples: how students spend their weekends or how their families celebrate a special holiday.
2. Request written essays on the topic, making sure the students know that you are interested in their ideas and that they will not be graded on their English (or Spanish, etc.).
3. Analyze the essays for commonalities and differences, both within and between the groups represented (ethnic, sex, etc.).
4. Discuss with the students whether your perceptions are accurate. What summary findings can you arrive at?

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1. Recall and describe an experience which involved discrimination.
2. Analyze the cultural orientations of the people involved, where appropriate noting "ethnocentrism." (see Monograph I).
3. Suggest how the incident could have been avoided through the concept of "cultural relativity" (see Monograph I).
4. Conduct class discussion of ethnocentrism and cultural relativity.
5. Ask students to write essays on their own experiences involving discrimination.
6. Select one of the essays for class discussion and analysis, asking the permission of the author in advance and making sure to protect his or her identity and any confidential information.

There are many other techniques used by anthropologists in carrying out fieldwork, such as geneological surveys, network analysis, ethnoscience, and microethnography, but these techniques all require specialized training beyond the scope of this presentation. The techniques discussed in the preceding pages are those most essential to any fieldwork endeavor and are sufficient for basic anthropological inquiry regarding the cultural processes at work in classrooms, schools, and communities.

We have stressed qualitative techniques for collecting cultural data rather than quantitative techniques. Both approaches, however, have their respective strengths in anthropological inquiry. The best research, in fact, draws on both quantitative and qualitative methodologies

to support each other. However, since much information on quantitative techniques is already available within the field of education, we have chosen to focus attention on the qualitative dimensions of learning about another culture.

MAJOR PHASES IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

As noted at the outset, this monograph focuses on some methodological techniques useful in carrying out fieldwork. In addition to gathering information, the overall research process includes planning, analysis, drawing some conclusions, and deciding on next steps. In the case of applied (action) research, this means using the findings in some way to help solve the original problem identified by the fieldworker.

The first task in preparing for fieldwork is deciding what to study. In other words, before beginning to do research, fieldworkers need to be clear about the problem they wish to explore. For example, teachers in bilingual education projects may wish to find out how non-bilingual education teachers in their school or community feel about bilingual education and why they feel as they do. Or parents may wish to learn about the different types of bilingual projects, comparing the model used in their school with those in neighboring districts. Administrators may wish to learn from parents what they believe their roles and responsibilities are or should be in the education of their children.

After deciding on a general problem, the next step is to break the problem down into smaller sections or sub-questions. If, for example, bilingual educators want to learn why many people in their

school/community are negative about, or even hostile towards bilingual education, they might decide that three key questions to explore are: (1) how much do people actually know about the reasons and importance for bilingual education, its goals, objectives, successes, etc.; (2) how do people feel about maintaining and developing children's competencies in languages other than English; and (3) which ideas (translated into action) would help turn public attitude around in support of bilingual education? Of course, the problem could be approached in many different ways and many alternative questions could be specified.

After deciding on the problem and the specific research questions, fieldworkers need to decide next how they can best answer the questions. At this point, they will wish to select the fieldwork techniques which will be of most use in gathering the desired information, e.g. in-depth interviewing with a few people; short, structured interviews with a large sample of people; participation and observation; review of news releases on bilingual education; meetings with politicians, etc.

Further, fieldworkers need also to be clear about the conceptual framework (see Arvizu and Snyder, 1978) which will guide both data collection and analysis. For example, will they focus on public attitudes right now in the present, or will they be interested in how the attitudes have developed and changed over time, or will they project what attitudes will be like in the future if current trends continue? Will they focus on the perspectives of mainstream or minority ethnic groups? Will their analysis be guided by seeking an insider's or outsider's perspective? In a similar manner, a conceptual framework might emphasize the ideal versus the real, or it might take a comparative view versus a single cultural view, and so forth.

In designing a project, care must be taken to limit the problem

so that it realistically can be addressed, given the constraints of time, cost, personnel, and the technical training available to the researchers. It would be unreasonable, for example, for one fieldworker to attempt to gather in-depth interview data from all parents of students in one school on their appraisal of their children's education. It might, however, be possible to narrow the project to attitudes of parents of students in one class about bilingual education.

Judging by the experiences of those who have used the conceptual and methodological tools set forth here and in Arvizu and Snyder (1978), it is clear that most novice fieldworkers are overly optimistic about the size of the project they realistically can carry out. We urge our readers to keep their projects small, at least until they have gained experience in using the conceptual and methodological tools. We also urge fieldworkers to be cautious about generalizing. Just because a few informants say that bilingual education is a failure (or a success), it does not mean that the informants are representative of the general community/school feeling. Findings based on a limited number of interviews (or observations or life histories) can be checked out more systematically and thoroughly in the future, where there is a need to generalize.

An additional suggestion, based on the experience of those who have used the materials here, and in Monograph I, is to plan sufficient time for data analysis. Those using the materials have been quite successful in setting up projects and in carrying out fieldwork. In the process they have collected rich, informative, and frequently useful data. More difficult, however, have been the tasks of analyzing the data, particularly from an anthropological perspective, and

applying the data in a way which improves the efficiency or effectiveness of a project.

Several suggestions which may help guide analysis are: (1) go through the data to pick out common themes and patterns; (2) take note of ideas which do not fit the pattern or which were unexpected; (3) determine which of the original research questions can now be answered; at least tentatively; (4) decide whether additional data are needed or whether it is possible to arrive at some conclusions; (5) be cautious about generalizing from one's informants to others who were not involved in the study; (6) decide on next steps and recommendations. It is entirely possible that the fieldwork will not provide conclusive answers to the research questions. A more likely outcome is some clues and leads which can be followed up now that they have been identified, or some ideas about how to bring about educational change, which can now be explored with others.

Our readers should be prewarned that comprehensive and intricate data analysis from an anthropological perspective requires supervised practice and is beyond the scope of this monograph. Even with simple types of analysis, however, much can be learned from a fieldwork project that can be used to improve the quality of bilingual/cross cultural education.

Application of Findings

There are several major ways in which fieldwork can be helpful to bilingual education. First, fieldwork changes the fieldworkers themselves by increasing their understanding of how culture affects their own behavior and that of others--students, teachers, parents, administrators, etc. Further, it increases one's knowledge about cultural

differences and can provide the fieldworker with a comparative and cross cultural perspective. Fieldwork is thus an important training tool; those who carry out fieldwork inevitably increase their skills and effectiveness in working in cross cultural situations.

Second, fieldwork findings can be used to affect legislation, policies, and decisions at the local, state, or even federal levels. Fieldwork, for example, can yield important types of evaluation data not provided through traditional measures of student achievement. The descriptive data from fieldwork can be used to complement the quantitative data gathered through standardized tests.

Frequently, a qualitative measure can tell us more, can even be a more valid measure of the impact of bilingual education than a traditional quantitative measure. Information such as why parents and students prefer bilingual projects, why truancy is down, how many and what types of books bilingual projects students are checking out from the school library, why discipline is less a problem, why students feel better about themselves, etc., tell us a great deal more about the impact of a particular bilingual project than simply the increased percentages on a reading test. Evaluation findings such as these can readily be gathered through fieldwork and in turn can be persuasive in impacting public opinion or changing official policies.

A third, and equally important possible outcome from conducting fieldwork, is the development of closer ties between home and school. Parents and teachers, simply by expressing a genuine desire to learn more about each other's worlds, will decrease the separation and discontinuity between the two. Further, both teachers and parents will see how classroom activities can be modified to build upon the students' traditional cultural patterns and how parents and community can be

utilized more effectively as partners and mutual supporters in the education of young people.

Related to building closer home-school linkages is the improvement of curriculum content using the data gathered in fieldwork. Through life histories, or interviews, or the collection of cultural artifacts a teacher can readily make the curriculum more reflective of the varieties of cultures represented by the students. Also, the teacher can bring in parents and elders from the community to provide "live" curriculum by inviting them to tell their life story, or to provide a historical perspective on life in California, or in other geographical areas. A discussion might follow regarding which aspects of the culture have changed the most rapidly and which have remained basically the same over the years to illustrate both cultural continuity and change and to compare present community values with those of previous years.

Another type of fieldwork application is the analysis and solution of culturally-based educational problems. Fieldwork techniques can be useful first in describing a problem, or even uncovering a problem which previously had not been recognized, and secondly in providing clues for solving the problem. If school personnel learn through fieldwork that parents of a given ethnic background believe it is not their "proper" role to become involved in school activities, both teachers and administrators will be more sensitive about pressuring parents to come to school. If, in addition, they learn that the parents' belief is based on a feeling that teachers are to be treated with deference and that it would be presumptuous and rude to make suggestions or offer assistance, school authorities can proceed to find areas where it is culturally appropriate for parents to make

suggestions and become involved.

Ethical Issues

In doing any fieldwork there are a few suggestions which we urge our readers to consider, particularly regarding ethical issues which surface whenever anyone becomes involved in the lives of others as a researcher.

(1) Accountability to those with whom one works is crucial. When doing research fieldworkers must take care to introduce themselves, explain what they are doing, why, and for whom. If official permission is required from community or school members, it should be sought and received before the project begins. If copies of the findings are requested by or promised to school/community people, fieldworkers must be sure they are sent and received. Finally, and most importantly, the fieldworkers must consider themselves accountable for how their findings are utilized and that they in no way prove injurious to their informants.

(2) Fieldworkers should seek local feedback on their work to guard against unintended but possibly harmful outcomes. This helps to assure accuracy of findings, provides an opportunity for clarification, and amplification, and provides local people a chance to suggest how the findings should be used.

(3) It is customary in carrying out fieldwork to make every effort to protect the identity of one's informants. Informants need to be assured that information given in confidence will not be revealed. In such cases, the fieldworkers will simply omit confidential findings in final reports. It may be necessary sometimes to alter in minor ways the information provided by informants to be sure it cannot be

traced back to them. If information can be traced to a given individual, or if an informant's identity is to be revealed, permission must be granted in advance. Protection of one's informant is the responsibility of every fieldworker.

(4) Reciprocity is another critical issue for fieldworkers to consider. If the fieldwork process involves simply taking from informants and there is no parallel giving back (to individuals, school, or community), it is unlikely that these same individuals will participate willingly in any future research efforts. Making available to local people the knowledge learned is a first step. A second step is helping local people solve problems which they have identified, just as they have helped solve the problems identified by the fieldworker.

CONCLUSION

As indicated in Monograph I, miscommunication and conflict can easily occur between people who have different cultural orientations and perspectives. Central to delineating the source of conflict is clarifying the conceptual viewpoint of the people involved. But even when one is conscious of conflicting points of view, it is not a simple task to gather information about these differences or to resolve them.

As we become conscious of our own behavior, however, and its impact on others, we move from being not only products of our circumstances but also to becoming reflective and active beings. The "Demystifying the Concept of Culture" training series encourages teachers and parents to become actively involved in the learning process. This monograph has presented a number of techniques as

strategies for learning about culture, our own and that of others. The techniques are means for initiating the process of learning about cultural matters. These techniques are also potential tools for researching, evaluating, or developing different aspects of bilingual programs. Used in conjunction with the conceptual tools from Monograph I, the methodological tools and techniques can be applied to the reader's own particular circumstances. One can develop knowledge and skill through engagement and praxis rather than through reading alone.

As a stimulus for using anthropology to solve cultural problems, this monograph is only a beginning. Additional monographs developed by the Cross Cultural Resource Center show how the conceptual and methodological tools can be applied to a particular cultural community (Cultura Chicana by Arvizu, et. al., 1978), and how teachers can learn about children's culture through the study of their games and play (A Teacher's Guide to the Cross-Cultural Study of Children's Games and Play by Rich and Gibson, 1978). Those who are interested in pursuing the techniques and issues discussed in this monograph are also encouraged to use the bibliography which follows, as well as the additional references available from the Cross Cultural Resource Center.

We have provided some illustrations of culturally-based school problems, of possible fieldwork projects, and of how fieldwork findings might be applied to improve educational practice. We recognize, however, that teachers and parents are in a much better position to know exactly what their schools' problems are and what their needs are. All problems are not culturally based and even some of those that are may require complex strategies for solution. However, where there is discontinuity and conflict between school and home which is cultural

in nature, these tools perhaps can serve as a means to understanding and dealing with the difficulties.

In applying knowledge in an understanding way, fieldworkers become more than just collectors and transmitters of knowledge, they also play the role of cultural brokers. As noted at the outset, bilingual education and other innovative educational efforts that seek to change the status quo will be threatening to some of those whose traditional roles and statuses are affected. Culturally proficient people, both parents and teachers, are needed as go-betweens and mediators in situations involving tension and conflict. Taking action to solve a problem implies being involved in defining options, as well as being informed about alternatives. For those who wish to move beyond the passive role of cultural transmitter, the more active role of cultural broker needs to be considered.

A cultural broker is one who understands the cultural rules at work within different communities/schools and who is willing to bring seemingly separate worlds into a positive working relationship. As an interface between home and school or between cultural groups in each of those places, a cultural broker can assume a variety of roles.

In building a bridge between school and community, a broker can either be community-oriented or school-oriented. A school-oriented broker will, when facing a situation of cultural differences between the school and community in areas such as curriculum, articulate and advocate a position supportive of the school's way of doing things. A community-oriented broker, on the other hand, would advocate the local perspective on cultural material for the curriculum, encouraging the school to recognize cultural experts from the community who may not have the usual formal educational credentials. Such a broker

might encourage the use of elders and others in the school or encourage teachers to participate in community events.

Several other possible roles which are possible for the broker are those of the puppet and the liberator. What separates these two is the matter of consciousness about domestication and determinism. A puppet broker is one who is used by other people and many times is unaware of being used, for example, the teacher aide who interprets for many of the school teachers and is used to "transfer the heat" when an angry parent comes to school. The liberator broker is one who understands the processes of change and is deliberate in strategy and skills to introduce and operationalize an innovation or mediate a problem. An example of a liberator broker is one who encourages parent participation in carrying out qualitative evaluations of bilingual programs and activities.

Another role which could be assumed by the cultural broker is that of the humanistic "Don Quixote." Just like the idealistic character from Cervantes, this type of broker is very unrealistic, fights "windmills" and is easily disregarded by those in power. An example of this type of person is one who challenges the school system and the teachers' union to a do-or-die duel with little hope of achieving one's goals. (The goal might be to fire all existing monolingual teachers, regardless of tenure, and to hire all new bilingual teachers.) Cultural brokers need to be aware of, analyze clearly and systematically, issues, strategies, and circumstances in each cultural situation.

For maximum utilization of cultural and educational resources in both teaching and learning, we need a cadre of well-trained, cross cultural specialists who can function constructively and creatively

in the margins of culture contact and interaction. In fact, if one believes in respecting cultural differences, an advocate role is needed to build a constituency of culturally-informed citizens. The tools and ideas presented here can be used to build such a constituency. Pero es una cosa hablar y es otra cosa hacer. However, it's one thing to talk; it's another thing to act.

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